

BULLETIN
of the
Catholic Theater Conference

Emmet Lavery, Chairman
E. Francis McDevitt, Editor

VOL. I

August 1, 1937

NUMBER 2

FIRST BULLETIN IS WELL RECEIVED

The reception accorded the first number of our BULLETIN has been so warm, laudatory and enthusiastic that we were most encouraged and inspired in the preparation of this second issue. Since the BULLETIN was unanimously regarded in the Chicago meeting as a piece de resistance of the Conference, the success of the first issue, attested by the many fine letters and expressions from our readers, should be a source of much satisfaction to all members of the Catholic Theater Conference.

Originally, it was planned to send the first issue of the BULLETIN only to those who registered at the Chicago convention and to a selected list of prominent Catholic personages, whose interest in the Catholic Theater Movement we felt would be enhanced by a detailed knowledge of what went on in Chicago. However, within a few hours after the BULLETIN was mailed we were deluged with requests and were forced to run off several hundred more copies. Even those have been exhausted and your Editor and his aides were hard pressed the other night to find a single available copy for our own files.

COME TO WASHINGTON

At this writing, the Convention Committee, under the chairmanship of the Rev. J. J. McLarney, O.P., is up to its collective and proverbial neck in final preparations for the second meeting of the Conference to be held in Washington, August 7 and 8.

Interest in the Chicago meeting and in the Conference subsequent to the June sessions has risen to such an amazing degree that the Convention Committee confidently expects at this time that the list of delegates will reach 700.

The meeting in Washington is a most vital and important one, for it is in the course of the coming sessions that the Catholic Theater Conference will be given the stability and assurance of permanence that it must have to continue the fine work accomplished in the short space of the past few weeks.

We, therefore, strongly urge ALL of our readers who are at all interested in or associated with the advancement of drama in our Catholic schools, colleges and Little Theater groups to come to Washington and assist in furthering this historic and significant movement for the unification of Catholics in the use of the drama as a potent moral, artistic and spiritual force.

A fine program has been arranged and the Capital City is now at its resplendent best for the reception of visitors. The Catholic University of America, where the sessions will be held, is located outside of the city proper and, therefore, beyond the desiccating touch of Washington's torrid weather.

PROGRAM FOR CONFERENCE

Prominent leaders in the field of the drama will be heard at the second meeting of the Catholic Theater Conference, which will be held at the Blackfriar Institute of Dramatic Arts, the Catholic University of America, Saturday and Sunday, August 7 and 8.

Designed to complete the work of organizing the Catholic Theater Conference initiated at the sessions held in Chicago, the convention here will bring together priests, religious and laymen and laywomen active in the field of Catholic dramatics. The adoption of a Constitution and the election of permanent officers will be the principal business of the convention, although

the Convention Committee under Father McLarney has assembled a program which will include addresses, dramatic entertainment and theatrical exhibits.

Keynote By Msgr. Sheen

The meeting, which will take place in the Blackfriar Theater at the University, will open on Saturday morning, August 7, with a General Session at which the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph M. Corrigan, Rector of the Catholic University, will welcome the delegates. The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen, Professor of the Philosophy of Religion at the Catholic University, will give the keynote address, and Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney, of Wyoming, will deliver a message of interest.

Other speakers at the first General Session will be Sister Jean Marie, O.S.F., of the Yale School of Drama, and Dr. Anton Lang, Jr., Professor of German at Georgetown University and son of the former Christus of the Oberammergau Passion Play.

The invocation, "Ave Maria," will be sung at this session by the choir of the Model School at the Catholic Sisters' College of the Catholic University. The choir will be directed by Sister Wilma.

Emmet Lavery, noted Catholic playwright and author of "The First Legion," who promoted the Catholic Theater Conference and is at present its Chairman, will preside at the Washington sessions.

Sectional Meetings

Following committee and sectional meetings in the early afternoon of August 7, the second General Session will be held. The program for that session will consist of brief addresses and intermediary reports of committees. Those who will address that session are Sister Mary Poter, O.P., of Rosary College, River Forest, Ill., the Rev. F. G. Dineen, S.J., of the Loyola Community Theater, Chicago, Vice-Chairman of the Conference, and Miss Agnes G. Regan, Executive Secretary of the National Council of Catholic Women.

That evening an informal banquet will be held in the dining hall of the University. The Rev. Dr. John H. Mahoney, Director of the Catholic Repertory Theater in New York City and Vice-Chairman of the Catholic Theater Conference, will be toastmaster. Speakers at the banquet will be: the Rev. Francis X. Talbot, S.J., Editor-in-Chief of America; the Rev. Dr. Urban Nagle, O.P., Director of the Blackfriar Institute of Dramatic Arts; the Rev. V. S. McDonough, S.J., of Georgetown University; Mrs. Josephine Callan, of Northwestern University, and Norman Griffin, of the Catholic Historical Society.

Entertainment at the banquet will include several musical numbers by Mlle. Frances Mohan, Senorita Rosamira Coloma, George O'Connor and others.

Convention Mass In Shrine

The program for the following day, Sunday, will open with the Conference Mass in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, which is located on the campus of the University. The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Michael J. Ready, General Secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, will preach the sermon. The Most Rev. John M. McNamara, Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore, will preside. Music for the Mass will be furnished by the Augustinian Friars under the direction of Milton Boyce.

Sectional meetings will follow the Mass, and later in the afternoon the third and final General Session of the conference will be held. That session will feature addresses by the Rev. Thomas F. Carey, O.P., Professor of Adolescent Psychology at the Catholic University of America, Sister Mary Leola, of Mundelein College, Chicago, and Miss Ann Ford, of the New York Theater Guild.

Following the addresses there will be final reports of committees, action on the proposed constitution, and the election of officers.

The convention will come to a close in the evening with a program of three one-act plays by the Placidian Players of Maplewood, N. J., students of the Summer Session of Drama at Marywood College, Scranton, Pa., and the Washington Chapter of the Blackfriars Guild.

We have just been advised by the Convention Committee that acceptances to invitations for places on the program have been received from the Rev. Lucien J. Arrell, Chaplain of the Newman Foundation of the University of North Dakota and an authority on pageant plays; Sister Consuela, of Marywood College, Scranton, Pa.; Sister Mary Donatus, of Immaculata College, Immaculata, Pa.; and Mother Mary Joseph, Foundress and Superior of the Maryknoll Sisters.

EXHIBITS

Many splendid and interesting exhibits are being arranged for the convention. Among the several groups that will contribute demonstrations to the convention are: Immaculata Players, of Immaculata, Pa.; St. Matthew's Book Stall, Washington, D. C.; Marywood College, Scranton, Pa.; Blackfriar Institute of Dramatic Arts, of Washington, D. C.; Rosary College, River Forest, Ill.; WPA Federal Theater Project; Trinity College, Washington, D. C.; Bernard J. McConnell, of Washington, D. C.; Mundelein College, of Chicago; the Washington Chapter of the Blackfriars Guild; St. Mary's of the Springs College, Columbus, Ohio.

CONVENTION ARRANGEMENTS

For the benefit of those who may not have seen a copy of the first BULLETIN and also to stress the importance of making arrangements immediately, we are repeating information received from the Convention Committee concerning accommodations for delegates available in Washington.

Accommodations

The Convention Committee announces that a limited number of accommodations will be available at the University for men and women at no charge. Meals will be served at nominal cost. Since the number of rooms is limited, those planning to attend the convention are urgently requested to apply for reservations through the Convention Committee Chairman, Rev. J. J. McLarney, O.P., Blackfriar Institute, the Catholic University of America. Apply for reservations at once. Rooms will be assigned in order of application.

For those who shall desire or shall be forced to take hotel accommodations, we are advised that several of the downtown hotels have offered special rates for conferees. Please make your reservations through the Convention Committee immediately.

The Willard Hotel, anxious to cooperate with the Conference, quotes \$3.00 for single rooms, \$4.00 and \$5.00 for double rooms--all with bath.

The Dodge Hotel offers single rooms with shower and bath, \$2.50. For groups of two or more in a double room or suite, \$2.00 each.

The Washington Hotel quotes rates at \$3.00 for a single room, \$5.00 for a double room with twin beds.

The Raleigh Hotel has single rooms at \$3.50, double rooms with twin beds, \$4.50.

Wardman Park Hotel quotes \$3.00 for a single room with bath and \$5.00 for double room with bath.

The above hotels are comfortable and modern and located in the section of Washington most readily accessible to the Catholic University of America. The Wardman Park Hotel, one of Washington's better hostellries, while not as conveniently located, is nevertheless the choice of many visitors to the Capital.

The Convention Committee emphasizes the importance of making reservations at once, so that it can select the more comfortable outside rooms in these and other hotels.

Registration

The Convention Committee wishes to urge upon conferees the importance of registering for the Convention.

Banquet

The banquet scheduled for Saturday evening, August 7, will be informal and for the purpose of injecting a social and lighter note into the program. The addresses will be brief and on subjects of interest to all conferees and the entertainment will be the best attainable in Washington.

COMMITTEE CHARMEN

We have been requested to urge the members of the Executive Committee and Chairmen of Committees to make every possible effort to arrive in Washington on Friday, August 6, the day before the convention. The purpose of this request is to afford the officials of the Conference an opportunity to confer informally and thus perfect plans, reports and agenda for the convention sessions.

We trust that as many committee members as possible also will come to Washington before the convention opens, so as to meet with their Chairmen and discuss final reports.

HERE AND THERE

The reports of committee activity which have been flowing into your Secretary's office reflect a striking and efficacious discharge of duties undertaken but a few weeks ago.

Probably the busiest committee at the moment is the Convention Committee under Father McLarney, but we know definitely that the Constitution Committee under Father Lord has about completed its drafting of the proposed Constitution, and that the Women's Colleges Committee under Sister Mary Peter has completed a survey of women's institutions of higher learning, which has yielded a gold mine of data.

* * * * *

Another word about Sister Mary Peter's work, we believe, is well merited. Sister distributed questionnaires to our leading women's colleges, seeking information about the status and record of dramatics in the respective institutions. She has, to date, received replies from over thirty leading Catholic colleges with complete information and some encouraging evidences of excellent theatrical work by Sisters and students.

* * * * *

The office of your Secretary these past few weeks has been no place for one suffering from nervous maladies. He thought the city room of a newspaper office was bad enough, but it has the effect of a drowsy summer's day by a quietly gurgling brook in comparison to your Secretariat's bailwick.

Typewriters, dictations, a host of willing and self-sacrificing workers folding envelopes, licking stamps, whirling mimeograph machines, the periodic intrusion of Blackfriar Institute students in various stages of make-up and costuming, the whine of an electric saw in the Institute workshop, fashioning stays for flats in the process of fabrication--all of this we offer in humble explanation for the grammatical errors which crept into our first BULLETIN, and in unrestrained braggadocio for the lack of such errors in the current issue--we hope.

* * * * *

Tradition hath it that Caesar could and often did dictate to seven secretaries at once. Perhaps, that feat was a record. But it has been duplicated the past few weeks. In fact, Father McLarney has surpassed it, and it is a picture of cool and collected virtuosity he makes, strolling about the office, firing letters to what seems like ten secretaries, answering the questions of associates and non-associates, shaking hands with friends and extending invitations to the August convention, and smiling withal.

Ruth E. Tebbets, Supervisor of the Federal Theater Library, has requested recommendations and lists of Catholic plays which the National Play Bureau of the Federal Theater Project should like to add to its list of Catholic plays.

Miss Tebbets writes that the forthcoming list of Catholic plays "grows larger by the day," adding that "there is so much worthwhile material that it is hard to decide which plays to use in the first edition and which to hold over for the supplements."

It is to our advantage to cooperate with the Federal Theater Project in this compilation of Catholic plays, and the BULLETIN requests that any suggestions and recommendations be submitted to us. We shall forward them to Miss Tebbets.

* * * * *

As we go to the mimeograph machine, we are happy to learn that Monsignor Michael J. Ready, General Secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, who will preach the sermon at our Convention Mass, has been named a Domestic Prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor.

The BULLETIN is honored to be among the first to congratulate him for this well-deserved honor.

* * * * *

While the convention will be business-like, the program includes several items of entertainment to lighten the burden of prosaic proceedings. And, of course, a good deal of this entertainment will be dramatic.

However, a dramatic note in the sessions which will not be entertainment will be the Mass at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. It will be celebrated according to the Dominican Rite, and if you have never seen drama in the liturgy, you will see it in that beautiful and ancient ceremony of the Holy Sacrifice.

* * * * *

The convention program has a "siesta." It will occur from about noon on Sunday to four o'clock in the afternoon. We suggest that instead of taking the word "siesta" at its face value, you delegates making your first visit to Washington, try to see some of the Capital City's beauties. One of its salient points and a magnet for visitors of all kinds--the Franciscan Monastery and gardens--is but a few minutes' walk from the Blackfriar Theater on the Catholic University campus. A visit there will still leave time for a cursory tour past the Capitol, Potomac Park, the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, Arlington Cemetery, and along a bit of the Mt. Vernon Highway.

* * * * *

Have you noticed that our Chairman is using onion-sheets for his correspondence? We might take up a fund to keep him supplied with stationery, or we'll soon be hearing from him in letters written on paper bags.

* * * * *

Last but not least, to coin a phrase, is the grand news that our national movement is receiving a big push from Catholic University. Due to the success of the Blackfriar Institute, the University is to open courses in the Drama which will lead to a Master's degree. The courses open in September, and it is expected that the classes will be taught by Father Gilbert V. Hartke, O.P. Congratulations, Catholic University! God bless your work, Father Hartke!